What <u>You</u> Should Know About the Consolidation of the Parks Police and Montgomery County Police

Eight months ago, the Montgomery County Council formed the Montgomery County Organizational Reform Commission with the mandate to recommend ways to restructure the way County agencies do business to save money and increase efficiency.

One of the Commission's primary recommendations is to consolidate the Park Police and the Montgomery County Police Department:

> *(1) The fiscal crisis demands that we not ignore a clear fact: there are now two separately chartered police forces that serve Montgomery County. They are oriented to somewhat different missions, but nonetheless there are two, and when programs and services are being cut to the bone – and in some cases into the bone – the likely redundancies represented by two police forces cannot be dismissed. With compassion for the individuals involved and with appreciation for the special role of the Park Police and its unique services that must be preserved, we recommend that this incorporation be undertaken.*
> *(2) Despite the fine job they do, the presence of a separate police force for Montgomery County Parks is an aberration in local governance. Most major urban areas do not have separate police forces for their parks.*
> *(3) Incorporation of the Park Police into the County Police Department in no way diminishes support for and recognition of the role of the M-NCPPC. It should retain a strong planning and land use stewardship role in our region and can do so without a police force.*
> Refer to this link for Commission's final report:
> http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/PDF/REPORTS/ORC/ORC_FinalReport.pdf

This consolidation will save at least $2 million a year. This will be accomplished by eliminating 8 upper level management positions and 11 administrative positions that will no longer be necessary when the departments are consolidated. The actual number of officers patrolling the parks will not change. If fact, they will essentially be the same people. At a time when the County faces a significant financial shortfall for the coming fiscal year, our failure to implement the recommended consolidations would mean an increase in taxes or a further reduction in funding for libraries, vital social services, public safety and other services that have already been significantly reduced over the last three years. This consolidation will ensure the same – or even better – service for our parks.

Here are the facts:

1. The consolidation will enhance the efficiency of communication:
    - All units will operate on common radio dispatch channels and a common Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system.
    - Any public safety requests for service would be handled with no need to transfer to another communications center.
    - A single dispatcher would be responsible for all county and municipal police units operating within the geographic area.
    - All officers assigned to patrol functions and their supervisors would be operating on the same radio channel. These officers would be tasked with responding to calls for service in all non-regional parks as part of their overall patrol responsibilities.
    - Officers assigned to a newly-created Parks Division will be responsible for the patrol of and calls for service within the six Regional Parks. These officers will likely be the same officers that are currently patrolling the park system.

2. The consolidation will <u>improve</u> response times in a vast majority of County Parks:
    - The majority of parks in Montgomery County are small, local or neighborhood parks. These parks are often located a block or two off of major roadways. With over 500 MCP officers already assigned to patrol duties in these neighborhoods, adding county parks to their patrol area will only reduce response time for emergency calls to these parks.
    - On average, during 2010, County Police officers responded within four minutes of being dispatched to an emergency call. The time for an emergency call to be received, entered, dispatched, and responded to on-scene by a MCP officer is seven minutes.
    - Response time for Park Police officers were not available to us, but with <u>no more than seven</u> patrol officers working the <u>entire</u> county at any given time it is a safe conclusion that it exceeds four minutes.

3. The consolidation will reduce the cost to Montgomery County taxpayers:
    ➢ Unlike federal, state, and municipal police forces that are operating in the county, both Park Police and County Police are largely supported by the <u>same</u> tax money from the <u>same</u> taxpayers in Montgomery County. This is a duplication of services and wastes the already scarce pool of taxpayers' money.
    ➢ Consolidation will produce a minimum savings of $2 million a year from a reduction in administrative staffing along with upper management reductions –the $2 million figure assumes no reduction in the number of Park Police patrol officers.
    ➢ After in-depth analysis, the merger could actually produce additional savings due to the elimination of redundant positions and services.

4. The consolidation will make available additional County Police officers to provide support and respond to calls for services in Parks:

    ➢ The parks will now be patrolled by 500+ County police officers rather than only 42 Park Police officers (current total MNCPPC patrol staffing levels).

    ➢ The newly-created Parks Division will be staffed by highly trained officers who will be responsible for all activities within the six Regional Parks.

Tough times mean that government should look to eliminate duplication in services and seek efficiencies. A consolidation of Park Police and Montgomery County Police is a logical step in that direction. It saves money. It improves service. On the merits, it makes perfect sense.

	Total Potential Savings:	Type of Savings:
Proposal to Incorporate Park Police Services/Operations into Montgomery County Police Department	**FY12: $1,905,240**	**Ongoing**
	FY13 & beyond: $2,500,000	**Ongoing**
	Implementation Level:	**Service Impact Level:**
	Local/ State	**Improved in Parks**

Proposed Efficiency Structural Changes	Position Change	Efficiency Operating Cost Savings
• Eliminate 11 redundant administrative/back office positions.	-11	-$867,740
• Eliminate 6 Lieutenant/Supervisor Positions.	-6	-$712,500
• Eliminate 1 Captain/Supervisor Position.	-1	-$137,500
• Eliminate 1 Parks Police Chief position.	-1	-$187,500
• **TOTAL MINIMUM SAVINGS**	**-19**	**-$1,905,240**

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